

Kathmandu – Supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID/Nepal), a mediation center was launched at the Kavrepalanchowk District Court in Dhulikhel today. As an important component of USAID's Strengthen Rule of Law program, mediation centers will increase access to justice for all Nepalis by alleviating the overwhelming case burden on the formal justice system.

The center was inaugurated by Mr. Rana Bahadur Bam, Chief Judge of the Patan Appellate Court, who emphasized the need for such mediation centers.

“Courts all across Nepal have over 54,000 back-log cases with 13,000 pending at the Supreme Court alone. On average, 50,000 new cases are registered annually. Many of these can and should be resolved through mediation. We expect the mediation centers to bring down the numbers of back-logged cases in the formal justice-system and expedite the delivery of justice,” said Beth S. Paige, Mission Director of USAID/Nepal.

USAID/Nepal's support for the mediation program includes development of a standardized mediation curriculum and training manual, training on mediation practices and public education campaigns on the benefits of court-referred mediation.

Under the Rule of Law program, USAID is supporting the establishment of four mediation centers – the first two centers have been launched in the Lalitpur District Court and Dolakha District Court earlier this year; Kavrepalanchowk District Court Mediation Center is the third mediation center and one more is planned. USAID/Nepal funded the establishment of three other mediation centers under a previous Strengthen Rule of Law Program.

USAID/Nepal's two-year program to strengthen the rule of law is being implemented by the Asia Foundation and its local NGO partners. The goal of the program is to build the institutional capacity of the judiciary, promote alternative dispute resolution, and increase access to justice to help consolidate peace and improve democratic governance in Nepal.